

LAB CONSOLIDATION

ISSUE SUMMARY:

EPA has 10 regional laboratories, one located in each of EPA's 10 regions. The Agency regularly evaluates its laboratory portfolio in order to make cost effective recommendations for the future, ensure the efficient use of government resources and the long-term sustainability of the facilities.

UPCOMING MILESTONES:

FY 2021

- The **Region 8** Lab recently relocated from Golden, CO to existing space at the Denver Federal Center (NEIC) in Lakewood, CO. This project is mostly complete but awaiting final commissioning of the laboratory ventilation systems and fume hood certification. EPA and GSA are planning to complete this work in Q2 FY 2021
- The EPA is working with the regions and agency leadership to potentially extend the **Region 1** – Chelmsford, MA (lease expiration is 8/2021) and **Region 7** – Kansas City, KS (lease expiration is 3/2023) leases until the agency has appropriate funding and develops a colocation plan for them into EPA owned laboratory space.
- The lab in **Region 9** – Richmond, CA (lease is set to expire in 2023) is scheduled to move in FY 2021 to collocate with the owned EPA-ORD laboratory in Corvallis, OR. Construction of the Region 9 space in Corvallis is scheduled for completion in Q3 FY 2021, with Region 9 equipment moves, laboratory ventilation system commissioning, and fume hood certification scheduled for Q4 FY 2021. As part of the Region 9 to Corvallis collocation, OMS is working with Region 9 to leave behind the local laboratory capacity for Region 9 to perform short-term and emergency laboratory analysis – this site has been titled the FSSC (Field Support Services Center) and it is a shared site between Region 9 laboratory requirements and Region 9 emergency response warehouse. EPA is working with GSA to fit-out the Region 9 FSSC in the San Francisco Bay Area in FY 2022 with the region moving their Emergency Response Warehouse and remaining laboratory support functions that need to stay local to the Bay Area in FY 2022. Clean-up and Environmental Due Diligence Process will then occur at the existing Region 9 facility in Richmond, CA to ensure the agency is 100% out in FY 2023.

FY 2022

- The laboratory in **Region 6** – Houston, TX (lease is set to expire in 2025), is scheduled to begin moving in FY 2022-2023 to collocate with the owned EPA-ORD laboratory in Ada, OK. The Environmental Due Diligence Process will occur for the remaining lease period.

FY 2025

- The **Region 4** lab is currently undergoing a consolidation with the ORD lab in Athens, GA with completion expected by the end of FY 2025. Currently renovation design is 100% complete and the Environmental Due Diligence Process at the existing ORD laboratory is scheduled for completion in Q2 FY 2021. The complete construction contract was awarded at the end of 2020, and the project is currently phased out through 2020. The construction contract ID/IQ for Phase 1, which consists of demolition and site work, has been awarded. Construction Phases 2-4 will be awarded in FY 2022 - 2025, based on the availability of funds, with final moves and EDDP for the existing Region 4 laboratory scheduled for late FY 2025.

BACKGROUND:**Regional Laboratory Space**

In 2015, EPA completed a comprehensive long-term evaluation of its laboratory facilities. The study included detailed engineering cost analyses, external benchmarking of laboratory occupant density and modeled savings projections. Recommendations from the evaluation resulted in the EPA vacating and the elimination of energy intensive laboratory work in several laboratory facilities.

Efforts to vacate two additional EPA-owned laboratory facilities are currently underway: the consolidation of the Region 4 laboratory in Athens, GA to the EPA-owned research laboratory in Athens; the consolidation of the Region 8 laboratory in Golden, CO to the National Enforcement Investigation Center Laboratory in Lakewood, CO.

Currently there are no plans to vacate the Region 2 (Edison, NJ), Region 3 (Ft. Meade, MD), or Region 10 (Manchester, WA) laboratory facilities that are within EPA-owned space; nor is there a plan to move or modify one GSA/government-owned facility in Region 5 (Chicago, IL).

The remaining four laboratories (Regions 1, 6, 7 and 9) are leased from commercial developers. Due to the high cost of leasing commercial laboratory space for these four facilities, EPA is currently evaluating options (see “Upcoming Milestones” for more detail) that will preserve the laboratory functions, optimize the use of EPA’s owned laboratory space and minimize costs. Decisions are required well in advance of lease expiration in order to allow enough time for consolidation planning, moves and cleanup activities if the decision is made to vacate these laboratories. As noted in the second, third and fourth bullet above, Region 9 colocation to Corvallis and Region 6 colocation to Ada are underway. Also, the final two labs with lease expirations are Region 1 (Chelmsford, MA) and Region 7 (Kansas City, KS). EPA is working with the regions and EPA leadership to potentially extend these leases until the agency can develop a collocation plan for them into EPA-owned laboratory space (potential owned laboratory co-location options have not yet been identified, but it would be more likely that the space would be ORD/programmatic laboratory space and not collocated within the three owned regional laboratories).

Grosse Ile, MI - The EPA facility operated by the Office of Research and Development located in Grosse Ile, MI was utilized over 45 years to support mercury/trace metal research projects and develop sophisticated computer modeling and forecasting. In 2015, based on information from the EPA Lab Study, ORD determined it was beneficial to close the facility because of changing mission requirements, reduced staffing levels, and operating costs of the stand-alone facility. The remaining Region 5 employees were collocated at the National Vehicle Fuel and Emissions Laboratory in Ann Arbor, MI in 2019. The Environmental Due Diligence Process, which is the testing and clean-up process for the properties the agency is vacating, and closure activities have been completed and the excess process is underway with the General Services Administration (GSA). EPA has taken all reasonable actions in preparation for the disposal. The last remaining item is a determination if the facility needs to be placed on the Federal Agency Hazardous Waste Compliance Docket because of minimal heavy metal presence in some lab duct work and the boat storage area.

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

☒ Congress ☐ Industry ☐ States ☐ Tribes ☒ Media ☒ Other Federal Agency
☐ NGO ☐ Local Government ☒ Other: Local unions

MOVING FORWARD:

Regional Laboratory Space – As leases near expiration, develop options for each commercially leased laboratory.

LEAD OFFICE/REGION: OMS

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS: ORD, OAR, ALL REGIONS